

**METHODS AND APPARATUS FOR DECISION SUPPORT ACTIVATION AND
MANAGEMENT IN PRODUCT LIFE CYCLE MANAGEMENT**

Abstract of the Disclosure

Techniques are provided for product life cycle management over an information network. More particularly, techniques are provided for decision support activation and management in accordance with a product life cycle management process such as a collaborative design process. In one aspect of the invention, a technique for managing at least one collaborative process performed in accordance with a first entity and at least a second entity, comprises the following steps/operations. Information associated with the at least one collaborative process is obtained. Based on at least a portion of the obtained information, an information structure (e.g., a context pyramid) representative of the collaborative process is dynamically maintained so as to assist at least one of the first entity and the second entity in managing at least a portion of the collaborative process.